

Press Release
March 29, 2020

World Choir Games Flanders postponed to July 2021

The World Choir Games, the biggest singing competition for choirs in the world which was scheduled to take place this summer in Flanders, will **be postponed to July 2021**. This decision was reached by the Flemish Government and INTERKULTUR in consultation with the Local Organising Committee Koor&Stem, and the host cities Antwerp and Ghent. The health, wellbeing and safety of the participating choirs, the accompanying supporters and the many fans and visitors in Flanders are paramount. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, this can not be guaranteed at this time.

The World Choir Games were ready to welcome and bring together 550 choirs, amounting to more than 23.000 singers from 74 countries and regions, in Flanders for a unique and international event. The protective measures being taken by governments all over the world in order to prevent the spread of the virus are complicating the ability of the choirs to prepare for this event. The unpredictable course of the pandemic in the coming weeks and months, in addition to travel constraints, are forcing many choirs to review their travel plans. In these circumstances, the organisation of the World Choir Games is impossible.

It was a difficult, yet necessary decision, says Minister-President and Minister of Culture Jan Jambon: *"Postponing the World Choir Games is the only responsible avenue to limit the further spread of this virus. We are pleased that all the partners have come together to resolutely support this postponement, in doing so we will still be able to bring this top event to Flanders in 2021."*

The World Choir Games will be moved to 2-12 July 2021. Günter Titsch, President of INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Games: *"The decision to postpone the 11th World Choir Games by one year is a big step for the choir world. Together with our partners in Flanders, we have found a solution to be able to hold this cultural meeting of the world now in July 2021. I would like to thank all participants, especially our choirs worldwide, members of the jury and the World Choir Council, for their patience and solidarity, which comes from the strength of singing together. All of us together will now direct our forces towards the future and make the 11th World Choir Games the most beautiful, colourful and successful cultural event of the year 2021."*

Games Director Koenraad De Meulder: *"We are still getting used to the idea of postponing the World Choir Games. The Flemish choir community put an immense amount of effort into this competition and preparations for it were in full swing. The participation of international choirs also surpassed our wildest expectations. Now we look to translate this growing dynamic into a positive story about the WCG 2021."*

Flemish minister for Tourism Demir: *"For touristic and cultural Flanders this decision is tough, but I am convinced that we'll become stronger because of it. Flanders looks forward to making the event an unforgettable experience for participants and local residents. The motto of the World Choir Games "Sing together, share happiness", rings stronger now than ever."*

The Flemish Government, INTERKULTUR and Koor&Stem are ready to, together with the cities of Antwerp and Ghent, make the **11th edition of the World Choir Games from 2-12 July 2021** the largest edition of the World Choir Games! We are convinced that our sponsors and partners will continue to compose this piece of international music with us. Together, our goal is nothing less than the best edition in the World Choir Games history.

Detailed information for e.g. participating choirs, volunteers and people who had already purchased tickets will follow within the next few days.

The World Choir Games are an international choir event of INTERKULTUR and will be organised in Flanders in 2021 on the initiative of Event Flanders, which is a partnership of Visit Flanders, the department of Culture, Youth and Media, and the department of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the city of Antwerp, the city of Ghent and Koor&Stem vzw.

For now the World Choir Games continue virtually by singing together, see how they manage it:
<https://youtu.be/rZ5JssJkSSk>

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